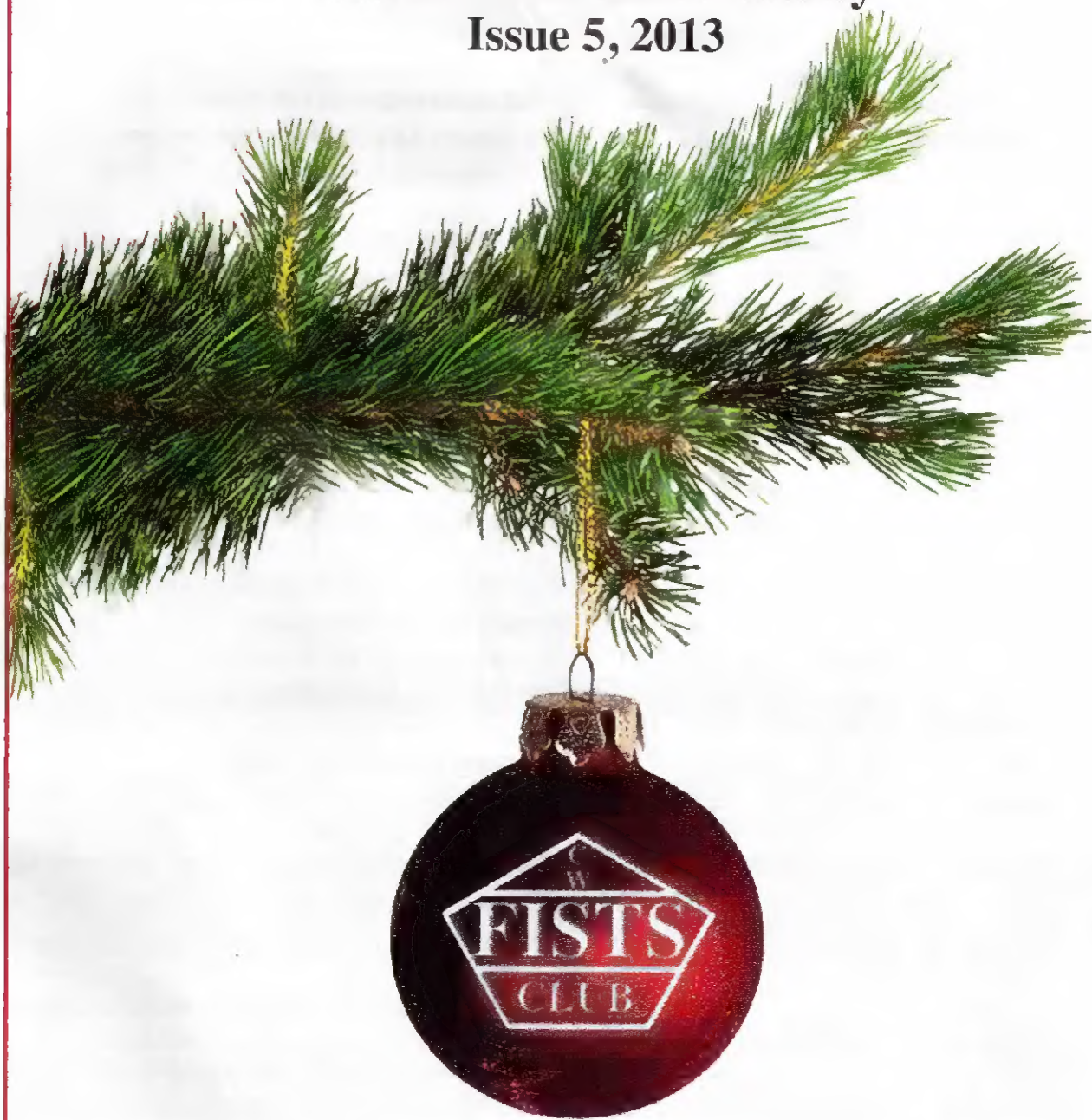


THE KEYNOTE

**Newsletter of FISTS CW Club — The International
Morse Preservation Society
Issue 5, 2013**



"When You've Worked a FIST, You've Worked a Friend"



INFORMATION PAGE

When you have a question about FISTS, go to the source for the correct answer.

Posting a question on a chat room or email reflector may result in a lot of opinions, but your best bet is to ask a FISTS volunteer or look in the reference issue.

Please put the word 'FISTS' somewhere in the title of your email.

This will help the volunteer recognize that your email is important and not spam.

For questions about:

Awards and Certificates contact

Dennis Franklin, K6DF, fistsawards@gmail.com
4658 Capitan Drive, Fremont, CA 94536

The QSL Bureau contact

Stan Reas, K4UK, k4uk@rev.net
1020 Long Island Drive, Moneta, VA 24121-1952

Our club call KNØWCW contact

Karl Zuege, KB1DSB, kb1dsb@gmail.com
478 CR 53, Rogersville AL 35652

The membership roster, call changes, name changes contact

Nancy, WZ8C
PO Box 47, Hadley MI 48440

To get an **application or sample** Keynote sent to a friend contact

Jim Ranieri, AA9LS, aa9ls@turbotoads.com
33778 Rebecca Road, Kingston, IL 60145

Web page changes, getting your personal or club webpage linked, etc contact

Webmaster Dennis Franklin, K6DF,
fistsawards@gmail.com

Club presentation packets contact

Joe Spencer, KK5NA, kk5na@kk5na.com
3618 Montridge Court, Arlington, TX 76016

Code Buddy volunteers and buddies contact

Nick Yokanovich, K3NY, & The Historical Electronics Museum Amateur Radio Club,
k3ny@cablespeed.com
108 Brent Road, Arnold, MD 21012

Sprints contact

Ed Wlodarski, N2ED, N2ED@fists.org
3 Shore Road, Andover, NJ 07821-2240

Get Your Feet Wet Weekend /G3ZQS Memorial Straight Key Contest contact

Curtis Gidding KC9UNL, feetwetlogs@fists.org
109-B West Tomaras Avenue, Savoy, IL 61874

Ordering supplies: Irene Kott, WØ8E

44609 North Bunker Hill Dr, Clinton Twp MI 48038
or paypal to fists@tir.com.

Irene has no email capability. Some shirt sizes are sold out — check web page or email Nancy, WZ8C at nancy@tir.com.

All other questions, callsign/email/ postal address changes, (NO we do not get this info directly from the FCC!) renewal dates, membership questions and MOST IMPORTANTLY — articles for the Keynote, contact Nancy WZ8C, nancy@tir.com; PO Box 47, Hadley, MI 48440, phone 810-797-2033, fax 810-797-5808.

Please check your label for your renewal month/year — dues are \$15/year. and include award certificates, newsletter and use of the QSL bureau.



"When You've Worked a FIST, You've Worked a Friend"

North American Memo • Issue 5, 2013

Editor: Nancy Kott WZ8C • PO Box 47, Hadley MI 48440

Email: nancy@tir.com • Phone: 810-797-2033 (leave message if no answer)

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Hi FISTS,

Although I am writing this in November, you probably won't receive it until January, but the holiday wishes still apply — the FISTS volunteers hope you are having a happy holiday season.

I have a few items on which we'd like to get your opinion.

First is from Stan, K4UK, the volunteer who runs our QSL Bureau. The Bureau workers do an end-of-the-year mailout of the cards they have on hand. Some people have a lot of SASEs in file (some have over 50!) and these are taking up a lot of space and even sending out one a month would take years to use up. Stan would like to have three SASEs on file from everyone using the Bureau. So, what to do with those who have a dozen or more SASEs? Do you want them sent back to you or can Stan use them to send cards to people who don't send in SASEs? To those who don't send in SASEs, is it because you don't want to use the Bureau? It is a lot of work and time for the Bureau workers to make up envelopes for you and put postage on them. If you don't want the cards, let Stan know and he can either return the cards, assuming the people have SASEs on file, or throw them out if you don't want them. There is a lot of time and expense in running our Bureau, particularly when FISTS with lapsed memberships don't send in SASEs. That leaves it to those who do keep their dues paid to take up the slack in the postage/envelope/label/printing costs, which isn't fair. So, please pay your dues and send in SASEs.



Larry, KA8HFN and Bill, W2RST are hard at work doing renewals.



Let Stan know what you want him to do with your extra envelopes.

Second is the Sprints. We want to get as many FISTS participating as we can. Not only is it a fun event, but it helps people earning the operating achievement certificates. Did having a prize package give you an incentive to send in your log? Should we have more than four Sprints a year? Should we vary the dates? It's difficult to change the dates/times because it would have to be a time where there isn't already an event or net. A few years ago, we did change one of the Sprints to avoid the CQWW contest and that worked well because it gave people who can't get on the air during the weekends a chance to participate. If you have suggestions or comments, drop Sprint Manager Ed N2ED or me a note.

Third: DO WE WANT TO HAVE A BOOTH AT HAMVENTION IN 2014? We have had a booth at Hamvention for about 20 years and it has always been a big success with lots of renewals and new members, as well as a chance for us to get together. WO8E and I have always set up the booth and torn it down, which is an incredible amount of work. Unless you've



Jack, WB2FXK, always has a good time at the FISTS booth!

been involved in a big show like Hamvention, I don't think most people realize all that goes into it. It hadn't been a problem until this year (2013).

My brother had recently died suddenly and I had been released from a two week stay in the hospital and was still recovering. I literally couldn't walk five feet without stopping. No way could WO8E and I set

up the booth and run it for three days. I BEGGED for help on our web page, a mass emailing, the Keynote, and Facebook. The only ones I heard from were Bill W2RST, Bob K2OK, and Larry KA8HFN, who are experienced helpers that I was counting on anyway. They were able to get there Thursday and set up the booth and also did the lion's share of work at the booth, along with Jack WB2FXK (you can tell from this photo that he was having fun!).

We had about 200 FISTS sign in at the booth and I again begged for help so we could take a break. It was especially hard on me because I wasn't in any condition to do much of anything due to my health. Out of those 200 people only TWO stepped up and volunteered. I had to cancel a presentation about FISTS at a forum because I couldn't get anyone to cover the booth while I was gone. It was just pathetic. Although my health is much improved this year, we need people to help. I can understand being intimidated about trying something new or being afraid you would mess something up, but we would have you working with an experienced volunteer who can do the paperwork. All you'd have to do is hand out sample newsletters, code disks, pens, or whatever. I guarantee that you will have a good time and have a good feeling from knowing that you did something to help your club. If you are attending Hamvention and can spare an hour or so, please drop me a note and let me know you can help out. My address, as well as those of Sprint Manager Ed, and Bureau Manager Stan are on the inside front cover of the newsletter.

Your renewal date is on the label of the newsletter. Please check it and send in your \$15 to FISTS PO Box 47, Hadley MI 48440 or paypal to fists@tir.com.

It's cold outside, so warm up those rigs and get on the air! 73 88 Nancy, WZ8C.

AWARD LOGS

Dennis, K6DF, our Award Manager would like to point out that award logs should only include FISTS QSOs in which they have received a FISTS membership number from the station worked.

Recently, Dennis has been receiving a lot of award logs, both paper and electronic, showing QSOs well prior to the join date for the FISTS station listed. It is obvious that a

station was not a FISTS member when a QSO is listed with a date of 1995 and a FISTS number of 16XXX.

Going back through very old logbooks looking for people who are now members will not provide valid QSOs for a FISTS award. The FISTS member worked has to have been a FISTS member at the time the QSO took place.





FISTS AWARDS

By Dennis K6DF

Over the span of this column, Aug 2nd to Nov 15th, there have been some very good band openings. 10 meters has been good, at various times, from the west coast of the U.S. into Europe. It's been a long time since I've heard such good signals on 10 meters coming from Europe. Soooo, when you fire up the rig . . . give a call or two on 10 or 15 meters around the FISTS frequency and see if you can stir up some activity. You may be pleasantly surprised!

Award chasing activity has been a little slow over the summer months, but that is expected what with all the good weather around the nation. I know how that goes . . . riding a motorcycle on the back roads of California, listening to the sound of the motor and watching the beautiful scenery is hard to beat.

Take a quick look at the list of awards issued in this column and you will see that FISTS stations across the Atlantic have been on the bands and working for awards. I tip my hat to the European amateurs for all their hard work on the bands. Well Done!

Operating activity should pick up on the bands with the approach of colder winter months and better openings here and there on 10 and 15 meters. I plan to do more operating with the addition of a better heater in the garage this winter.

For those of you who have achieved many of the existing FISTS awards, remember there are now Band Spe-

cific Endorsements available for the WAS, RCC, and don't forget the new Spectrum award.

You may use the following e-mail address, (awards@fists.org) for sending in your award logs. Excel, Word, Open Office, and Text files are the only file types accepted. Please read the e-mail log rules on the FISTS web site for details.

Send in complete logs for awards. That means all of the following information: Call, Date of QSO, Band, FISTS Nr., Point/s claimed for each QSO. Incomplete logs will delay receiving your award.

Check the FISTS Web Page for additional information regarding current FISTS awards and how to apply for them:

<http://www.fists.org/awards.html>

If you have any questions about the awards that are not answered on the FISTS awards web page, feel free to e-mail your questions to me at... awards@fists.org

I hope to work many of you over the holidays and with that I will close this column by wishing you and your family a very Happy Holiday Season!

— 73, Dennis K6DF



FISTS AWARDS ISSUED — August 2, 2013 To November 15, 2013

Century Award

OE7LVI G4DXX
G3WCY WD8AFB
G4LRG K4GM

Silver Award

AA8MI W3QT

Gold Award

PA7RA

Platinum Award

AA8MI N5KIP

Millionaire Award

G4PRL

*Perpetual Prefix
Endorsements*

50 PREFIX

G4LHI KØLUW
GØOTT

100 PREFIX

G4LHI

4 Million Award

G4MLW

18 Million Award

K4UK

Normal 0 false false false
EN-US JA X-NONE

QRP WITH K3WWP — COLUMN #99

by John Shannon, K3WWP

As a take-off on the term DXpedition which itself is a take-off on the word expedition, we've coined the term Parkpedition. Who is we and what is a Parkpedition? That's what I'm going to talk about here in this column.

First of all, we refers to members of the NAQCC WPA Chapter, mainly Mike KC2EGL, Don K3RLL, Tom WY3H, and me. Parkpedition refers to taking our CW/QRP equipment to the local Kittanning Community Park to operate for something like two to four hours or so in late morning and/or afternoon.

According to my "Other Calls" log which lists my QSOs over the years that I made using calls other than K3WWP such as WA3IXO which I held for a couple years for my apartment in Pittsburgh, NAQCC club calls N3AQC and N3A, etc., our first Parkpedition was on September 2, 2009 although the term Parkpedition wasn't coined yet. That was with KC2EGL and me using N3AQC.

About a month later, Mike and I activated our NAQCC special event call of N3A during our club anniversary celebration. That one on Columbus Day October 12, 2009 was a memorable one. That's when we just about froze, and our

fingers became so numb from the cold we had trouble keying our rigs and had to pack up and come home early. It was also the one when we had our first visitor, Bob W3BBO who drove down from Erie to check us out. However he didn't make it before we closed up shop. He did catch us though, as Mike and I were taking my neighbor's dog Joe for a walk. Someone pulled up behind us and said something like, "Get a real dog". So after we took Joe back home, Bob visited for a while and looked at my home station. Then he went up to the park and worked us from there before he headed back to Erie.

Since those initial Parkpeditions, we've made probably 4 or 5 each summer as well as our one on Columbus Day each year for the NAQCC anniversary celebration. They include me and Mike and/or Don when Don is up here from Florida during June-September each year.

Our most recent one on Colum-

bus Day was our most successful ever with 76 QSOs made by Mike and me in four hours. We've also done contests from the park including the Skeeter Hunt this past summer. Although not really Parkpeditions, we've also operated a few times portable from WY3H's hilltop property and his yard. This year's FD was a real blast there. With CW/QRP only we outdid the local ham radio club with their high power and voice.

As far as the Community Park, it is a wonderful quiet location. The noise level there is virtually nil compared to my home QTH. It's so quiet, I have worked stations that you could say were RST 509. You can even hear distant thunderstorms clearly which get lost in my local noise at home. It would be nice if I could get some property near there and build a house, but that's dreaming.....

We've used various rigs up there including a KX1, K2, PFR, but the latest rig of choice is our KX3s. As you know from my bragging



on it, it's the greatest rig I've ever used, an opinion shared by many KX3 users. It has made operating at Parkpeditions as easy as the proverbial "falling off a log" with its marvelous design, especially the great display. Also its auto-tuner will tune practically any antenna we throw at it.

Speaking of antennas, the park

jumper(s). Very simple but a very effective multi-band antenna. It's simply fed with coax.

There is no source of electricity in the park so rigs are powered with batteries. I use a 7 Ah

usually nil, not even moving the S meter on the KX3. In fact, unless I turn up the volume, I can't tell the difference between having an antenna connected or not. Here at home, my noise level is almost always at least an S5, most of the time even higher than that.

To see more about Parkpeditions, you can check out the diary

“I really enjoy these portable operations although they make me realize just how noisy a location I have here at home.”


is an excellent place to experiment with antennas, something I can't do at home with my limited space. We've tried a variety of antennas. I can't even remember them all, but they have included an end fed 110' wire as well as shorter end fed wires in a horizontal or sloping orientation. Also some sort of mobile whip or other vertically oriented antenna. But the one that outshone all others is what we call the K3RLL jumper dipole. I'll give you a couple links where you can see more info about Parkpeditions and the design of the jumper dipole, but basically it is just what it says. the overall length when the

Gel Cell which easily gives me 4 hours of operating time with the KX3 at 5 watts output. Mike has the built in batteries and charger in his KX3 which give him about 2 hours operating time, after which he switches off to his relatively massive 12 Ah rechargeable battery which is so powerful it can start a car or power his 9.5 inch telescope. We can even run both rigs at the same time off that monster if need be.

I really enjoy these portable operations although they make me realize just how noisy a location I have here at home. As I said, the noise level at the park is vir-

on my web site at <http://home.windstream.net/johnshan/> or the past newsletters on the NAQCC web site at <http://naqcc.info/>.

If you've never operated portable out in the field somewhere, you don't know what fun you're missing, especially if you can do it with good friends as I do with Mike, Don, and Tom.

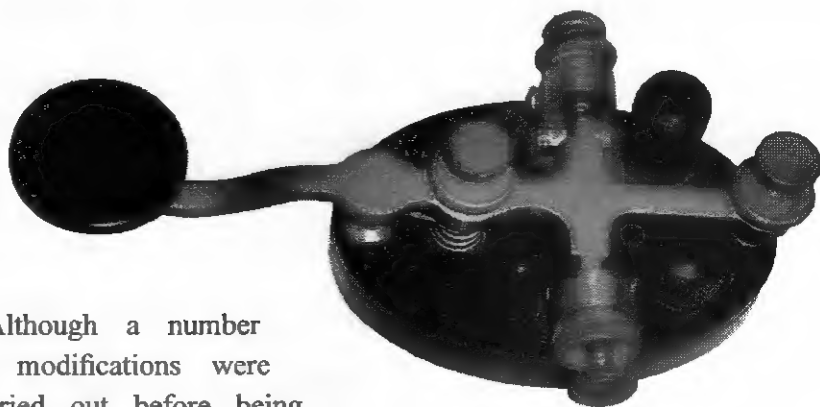
— Thanks for reading these columns and giving all the great feedback via email, letter, or on the air contacts. They are appreciated and make my time and effort worthwhile in producing them. Hard to believe the next one will be #100. Whew! - 73 and -30-

THE WADSWORTH KEY

By Bob Clinton, WØBUX

At first glance the key in the attached picture doesn't seem exceptional. Many thousands — perhaps millions — have over the years been built to this design. But this particular one has some history.

In 1958-59 I was a Navy electronics technician attached to the Destroyer Transfer Team based at Charleston, SC. Our mission was to assist with the handover of WW2 destroyers to friendly navies, in particular the West German Navy. Six destroyers (tactfully chosen from those that had fought in the Pacific theatre) had been pulled out of mothballs and were to be modernized (somewhat) and turned over to our NATO allies. One of these tin cans was the USS Wadsworth (DD-516). The Wadsworth was one of the famous Fletcher class (2,100 ton) destroyers. She had been built at Bath, ME and was launched on 10 January 1943. As soon as she was ready for action she was sent to the Pacific — and action was what she got. She participated in most of the ensuing battles in the Pacific, culminating in the action off Okinawa for which she received the Presidential Unit Citation. When the war ended she returned to the USA and was decommissioned on 18 April 1946 and sent to the Reserve Fleet, having been in commission for little more than three years.

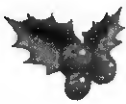


Although a number of modifications were carried out before being transferred to the Germans the existing radio and radar equipment was retained. The only exceptions were the radiotelegraph keys. The open frame keys, with their exposed contacts, were deemed to be unsafe and were replaced by the then standard US Navy enclosed keys. So it was that one day as I was walking along the deck of the Wadsworth I noticed a key — this one — in a rubbish skip. Naturally I rescued it.

Although I was not yet a licensed ham I had every intention of becoming one so I home-brewed a code practice oscillator and hooked up the key to it, putting it to good use to increase my code speed. In 1960 I was discharged from my

first hitch in the Navy and one of my first acts was to take the novice exam and get on the air. I built an Eico 720 75W transmitter from a kit and used the Wadsworth key to make my first QSO.

After a year I got tired of civilian life and re-enlisted in the Navy. The constraints of shipboard life, together with marriage and children, caused a hiatus in my ham radio career and it was not until 1971, after my final discharge, that I took the Advanced class exam and was back on the air. The Eico 720 had long since been sold, to be replaced by a Viking Valiant, keyed, of course, by the Wadsworth key. Before long, however,




as my code proficiency improved, I decided to move up to a Vibroplex bug. Nevertheless the straight key remained on the bench, connected in parallel for those occasions when I needed to work a slow station or when the bug got out of adjustment, mid-QSO.

In 1976 work brought me to England and the key came with me, along with most of the rest of my gear. And here we both remain. Although I still have and cherish the bug, it has been supplanted in

operation by a keyer paddle, but the Wadsworth key is still connected and ready for emergencies and for straight key night. Recently I purchased an ancient Eico 720 and am in the process of getting it back on the air. When it is ready it will be keyed with the Wadsworth key.

And what of the USS Wadsworth? She was re-commissioned as the Zerstoror 3 in the navy of the Federal Republic of Germany on 6 October 1959 and served that country until 15 October 1981. But

there was still service in the old girl — she was transferred to the Greek navy, remaining in service for another ten years before finally being scrapped.

My Wadsworth key has been used to send a variety of call signs. My own have been KN9EKJ, WB6OUO, G5BUX, GØBUX and WØBUX. But the most important one was NWFQ — the call sign of the USS Wadsworth when she was fighting in the Pacific during WW2. 

Photo# NH 90531 USS Wadsworth (DD-516) underway.



MY FIRST (CLUB) FIELD DAY

by Joe Falletta, W6UDO, Fists #9995

I enjoy operating Field Day...from my home QTH, that is.

I'm not really what you'd call a serious contester; I enjoy handing out points and seeing how well my stealth operation is getting out, honing my operating and especially my CW skills, all in between the various chores of the weekend. When conditions and the honey-do list are favorable I've been known to pull down 100 QSOs or more; then there are the lean years I'll make maybe a dozen.

I showed up at the club Field Day site hoping to learn enough to be comfortable enough to be able to operate and actually do some good for the club. As it was turning out, though, I spent the morning in eyeball QSOs with friends I'd only met before on the club two meter repeater.

The afternoon, though, I was standing outside the 20 meter CW trailer listening when a ham told me to come in and help out. "No pressure," he said, noticing the look of trepidation that appeared out of nowhere.

I went in and watched as Fred was sending, receiving, and typing at the computer keyboard. Here, have a seat, he told me, pulling out the empty chair next to him without missing a keystroke. Already, I felt the butterflies starting to dance in my stomach; the most I can multi-task is drinking a cup of coffee while carrying on a conversation with one person. I listened and watched for a while as Fred copied, sent, and typed, all while explaining to me what all the F keys did on the computer keyboard.

"F1 (tap tap tap) sends CQ FD and our call. F2 (tap tap) sends his call AFTER I've typed it into the log, with 5nn and (tap tap tap) our section. F3 send Tnx, 73 (tap, tap). It's easy!" For everything else, he used the iambic paddle next to the keyboard.

I was even more awed than I was before; the butterflies had invited their friends over.

At one point, Fred was having trouble copying a station thru the QRM. He asked me if I'd copied his state.

"I think it was California," I said.

"That was us," he replied.

"Oh."

The butterflies were throwing a party now. And when I'm nervous, my comprehension drops off considerably; my sending sounds like I'm running QLF (sending with my left foot). This was not the time for Fred to be inviting me to take over the helm. Fortunately, he didn't.

Unfortunately, to make this more embarrassing, Tom happened to be in the trailer with us filming Field Day activity

for the club's posterity I still don't know if that part made the final cut or wound up on the cutting room floor. I do remember wondering what the odds were, looking and sounding like a complete Lid AND having it filmed. All the while I tried to have a good laugh at myself along with everyone else while I felt my face turning beet red.

"Ah, is it hot in here or is it just me?"

That was it for me and Field Day with the club, any club!

To be honest, most of this was pressure I'd already put on myself. This club puts on a very professional Field Day operation (if I may use that adjective to describe an "Amateur" Radio event). It's all completely off the commercial power grid using generators and solar power on all the ham bands up into microwave, a large sign erected close to a major highway. They have a GOTA station, invite the press and government officials, and even set up on a vacant lot next to a Sheriff's substation. I wanted to be as professional as they were! That wasn't going happen, especially on my first visit to the site.

On the other hand, everyone I ran into that day was very friendly and supportive, and told me to just have fun with it.

"No pressure!"

Well, maybe next time.



VINTAGE TUBE GEAR CW NET

by Ron Mayer, W8KYD (#10121)

Are you aware of a cw net nowadays mainly comprised of all tube gear - e.g., Heath, Eico, Knight, Hallicrafters, home brew, etc? Well, one such social-type net is the Lake Erie Boatanchors Net (LEBN) which welcomes all cw stations while encouraging the use of vintage tube gear.

The LEBN is active each Saturday morning on 7.093 Mhz at 0900 ET. Alternating FISTS NCS ops are K3KYR, Jeff, whose QTH is Bortbay in northern New York, and this author, W8KYD, who is located near Cleveland, Ohio. Depending upon the number of check-ins, total net time has been within one hour. Other than the customary first transmission, signal report, QTH, and name, following transmission info normally consists of station gear, weather, FISTS info if any, etc. An effort is always made by the NCS to match code speed.

Since the LEBN operates on a frequency and time whereby it is not possible to accommodate the vast FISTS CW Club area, it is hoped that other out-lying vintage gear ops might be interested with

starting a similar net operation. The effort involved, I believe, would have a nostalgic effect for all participants in re-living those by-gone days when cw ops kept the tubes glowing!

— Please contact me at w8kyd@yahoo.com if any questions or comments regarding this subject. Thanks as 73.



MORSE EXPRESS CHRISTMAS KEY

Morse Express has released the 2013 Christmas Key, thirteenth in the popular seasonal series. The 2013 Christmas Key is a fully functional miniature telegraph key made by GHD Telegraph Key in Sendai City Japan. It incorporates traditional Japanese craftsmanship with GHD's impeccable engineering and finish.

The Morse Express 2013 Christmas Key is fully adjustable, with precision pin bearings at the trunnion, and it has two miniature binding posts. Its balance is perfect, and lever tension is provided by an unusual but very effective piston compression spring that is located forward of the trunnion post. The contacts are hard-silver and the unique and distinctive triangular base is finished in mirror-polished hard chrome. The knob is hand-turned ebony, and there are three small anti-skid rubber feet on the bottom for stability. GHD's Toshihiko Ujiie uses both modern and traditional techniques to produce a miniature key that will be equally at home in the radio shack, in the field, or decorating a Christmas tree.

Marshall Emm (N1FN), owner of Morse Express, says "the Christmas keys represent my annual opportunity to play around with key design and to have a master craftsman carry out the work.

This year's key features a trian-



gular base which is specifically designed to distribute the weight and the keying force, providing a stable platform." The 2013 Christmas Key measures 1-3/16 x 2 inches at the base and it weighs just over 2 ounces.

The 2013 Christmas Key is a limited edition of 150 keys priced at \$89.95, plus shipping and handling. Each key has a label with "Christmas 2013" and a unique

serial number. Pictures and more information are available on the Morse Express web site at www.MorseX.com where you will also find secure ordering facilities. Call (800) 238-8205 toll free to order by phone, or (303) 752-3382 for more information. The 2013 Christmas key will add something special to straight key operations through the Holiday Season and on Straight Key Night.



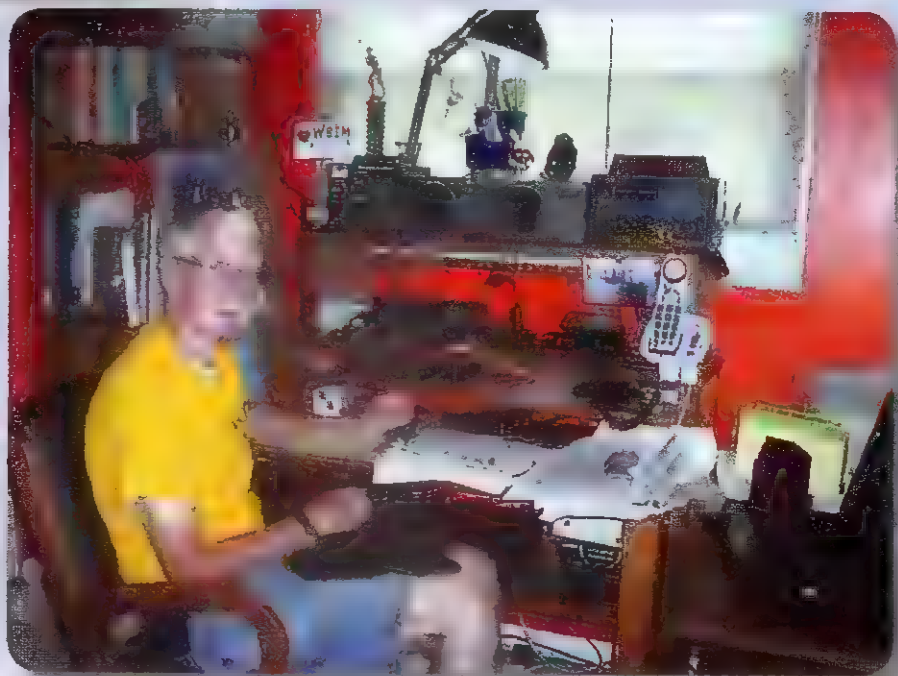


DEAN SEVER, W8IM, AT HIS TWO SHACKS



Dean, W8IM,
at the SS
American Victory
KKUI Radio Room.

Dean, W8IM, still actively serves as one of the REO's on board the SS American Victory which still uses CW for traffic. They run most all of their traffic thru Marine Coast CW Station KSM in San Francisco, there is still commercial cw being used! Next cruise will be November 16th.



Dean, W8IM, and his
cat, Whiskers, at their
home shack.

HOME BREW KEYS

by Ed Biter, Jr. #909

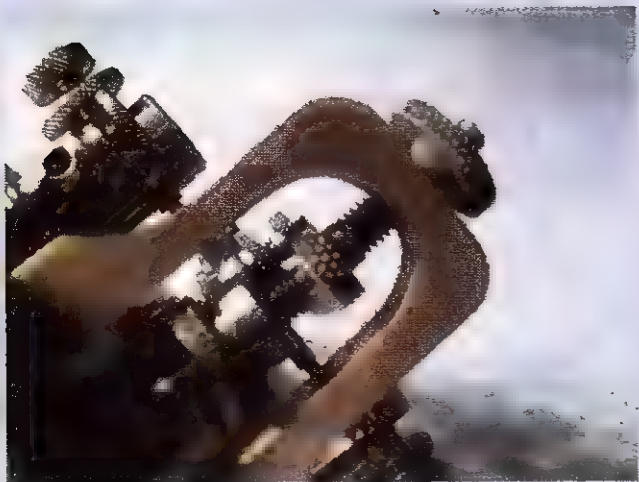
Here are a couple of my homemade keys. I collect keys and also make homebrew keys in my basement workshop.

The key with the round base is a creation of mine, and is my favorite straight key. The relatively long lever makes for very

smooth sending.

The second key I call the "erzats" key and is made up from parts of a straight key, sounder,

bug, and code machine. Very smooth sending, with easy front adjustments. A fun key to make.





Two views of the Titanic key by Ed Biter. The original Titanic was an English key made by Marconi.



HOW I BECAME A HAM WITHOUT

By Reg Bartlett, VE3GKB (ex RAF 639879)

Foreword

My fist was first heard on the air in July of 1939.

I was about 5,000 feet above a Royal Air Force airfield in Wiltshire, England.

I, and two or three other trainees aboard the small aircraft had been instructed to exchange signal strengths and to send a pre-prepared message to a ground station and receive and record a reply in morse code.

I was being trained, at the time, to become a Wireless-Operator/Air Gunner (WOP/AG). Now if anybody reading this thinks that this was my idea, forget it ! What I had in mind was something quite different. Let me tell you how it all came about.



Reg in flying gear in 1939.

Looking back through the many years (to 1938 to be exact), I was 17 years old and living in London, England. At that time there were two thoughts uppermost in my mind.

The first was that although I had a good job that would furnish me with advancement and a good living, it would probably bore me to an early death! The second thought was that the U.K. would almost certainly be at war very soon and that I would inevitably be involved.

The London newspapers of those days were full of recruiting advertisements for the armed services. One in particular gained my attention. It was seeking men to be trained as aerial photographers by the Royal Air Force.



EVEN TRYING



Reg on the left in Iran circa 1942.

Having been actively engaged in the processing and competitive side of photography as a hobby for the past couple of years, this seemed to be a natural choice, so I applied.

Early in 1939 after some medical and educational tests, the R.A.F. allowed me to join their ranks and started me off with six weeks of disciplinary training. At the end

of the six weeks came the good news and bad news situation. The good was that I was leaner, fitter and tougher than I had ever been before, or since. The bad was that they did not need any more trainees for aerial photographers right now. So, would I like to choose another trade or become a general duties airman and peel spuds in the cook house etc.? With

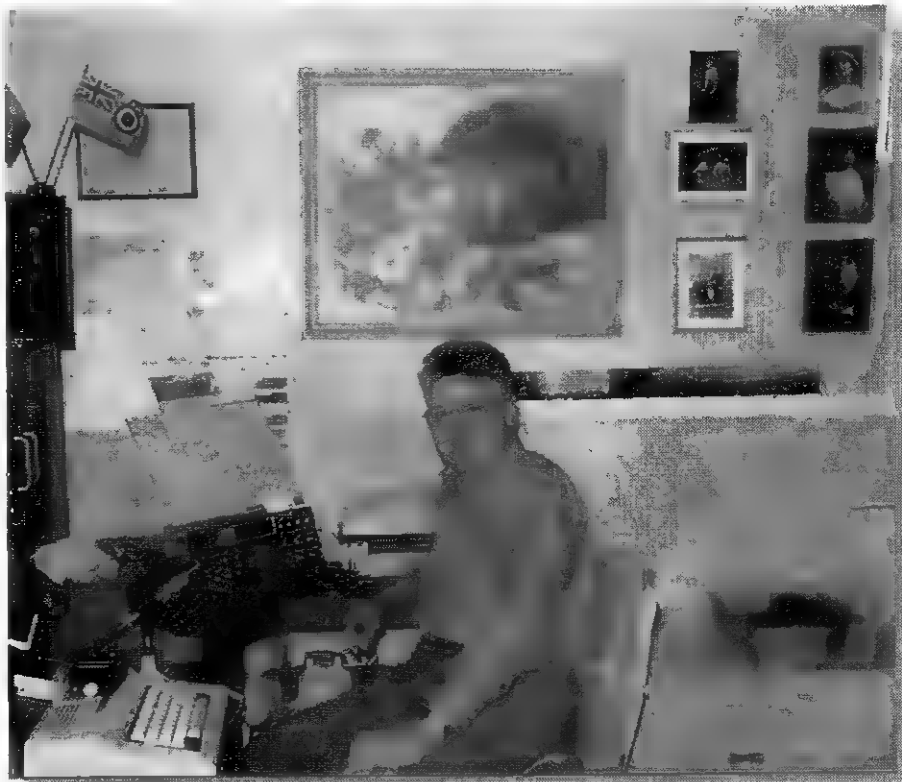
depressing visions of what noxious duties "etc." might include and the minimal rate of pay offered, I decided to try another trade. It was sheer blackmail but what could one do?

Among the list of courses available was that of Wireless Operator. Quite frankly my only interest in wireless (or radio as we call it these days) was to tune into the

BBC for the news. But the trade paid better, and seemed preferable to the spud peeling caper and that dreaded "etc." so I reluctantly accepted and hoped that the war would not go on too long.

At the beginning of the course I listened to the instructors, read the prescribed texts, did the necessary home-work (spare time-work, in this case), and somehow acquired the skill to send and receive morse code at three or four words per minute in a desultory, uninterested manner. I felt that the R.A.F. had tricked me into this situation. I felt cheated. But as the course progressed from DC and AC theory, to antennae and radio propagation and so on, I found that I was getting interested in spite of myself. I had even increased my morse code speed to ten w.p.m.

By the time the course was completed in the fall of 1939 war had started and I had passed my 18 w.p.m morse test, plus the radio theory exams, and also tests about the various receivers and transmitters of the day. I had also done my hour or so of air-to-ground communication. I was now completely sold on this new interest and proud to sew the "fistful of sparks" badge to my sleeve to show that I was officially an RAF Wireless Operator. As such I spent, and survived the war. Mostly in the middle east.



Reg at his ham station at McGregor, ON 1998.

Leaving the RAF in 1946 I came to Canada and became busy making a living and raising a family. Almost 20 years went by, and then my association at that time with the Royal Canadian Air Cadets reminded me of the years that I had operated "wireless" but was now known as "radio".

This led to a visit to the local Ministry of Communications office where I got my Advanced Amateur Certificate. It appeared that time had not diminished those skills that I had reluctantly acquired all those years ago.

From 1966 until I retired in

1986 I worked the ham bands on morse code only with various rigs. The first one of which was home brewed. The transmitter was not much more than a vacuum tube with a crystal in its grid circuit. I got an excellent signal report from a station in Chatham, New Jersey the first time I used it. I was hooked! Now at the age of 93 my hand is a bit too shaky to use a key without a lot of errors, so I have reluctantly acquired a keyboard keyer.

Am I glad that circumstances thrust me into radio against my will? Very much so!





FISTS C.W. Club Membership Application

Callsign: _____ Name used on Air: _____

Mailing Name & Address: _____

The following information provides a synopsis of the member's working conditions:

Rig(s): _____

Antennas: _____

Other Clubs Affiliations (ARRL, RSGB, etc.): _____

Other Interests: _____

Birthday: _____ Home Phone: _____

The newsletter is offered on audio cassette to blind members at no extra charge, do you require this service? _____

E-mail address: _____

~~Please enclose annual membership fee of \$15 (U.S. Funds)~~

Date: _____ Your Sponsor (Optional): _____

Signature: _____

Please make checks payable to FISTS C.W. Club and return to:

North, Central, and South America including all territories/islands:

Nancy Kott WZ8C
POB 47
Hadley MI 48440-0047
USA

For Australia and New Zealand see www.fistsdownunder.org, for East Asia see www.feacw.net
and for elsewhere see www.fists.co.uk.

FISTS SPRINT SUMMER 2013

QRO

Name	State	Fists #	Class	Total Q's	Member Q	Non Member Q	Points	Mults	Score	80M Qs	40M Qs	20M Qs	15M Qs	10M Qs
John	GA	2158	QRO	46	38	8	206	24	4944	1	17	25	3	0
Bob	WY	11830	QRO	21	17	4	93	14	1302	0	5	16	0	0
John	OH	16091	QRO	18	15	3	81	15	1215	1	10	7	0	0
Roland	NJ	2980	QRO	11	11	0	55	10	550	0	11	0	0	0
Bill	FL	6315	QRO	3	3	0	15	3	45	0	1	2	0	0

QRP

Call	Name	State	Fists #	Class	Total Q's	Member Q	Non Member Q	Points	Mults	Score	80M Qs	40M Qs	20M Qs	15M Qs	10M Qs
WU1V	Rick	MA	15748	QRP	19	14	5	80	13	1040	0	18	1	0	0
WA2NYY	Mark	NY	16325	QRP	11	9	2	49	7	343	0	11	0	0	0
AA7CU	Al	AZ	14241	QRP	6	5	1	27	6	162	0	2	4	0	0
K3HX	Tim	PA	5976	QRP	6	4	2	24	6	144	0	3	3	0	0
NA4O	Mark	GA	10158	QRP	5	5	0	25	3	75	0	1	2	2	0

CLUB

Class	Name	State	Fists #	Total Q's	Member Q	Non Member Q	Points	Mults	Score	80M Qs	40M Qs	20M Qs	15M Qs	10M Qs
W4TFF	Rick	NC	9700	79	63	16	347	37	12839	8	26	27	8	0
				0		0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0

SOAP BOX

Call	Comments
K3HX	I was only available to operate at the beginning and end of contest
KA4BAT	I missed the Spring Sprint, so sure wasn't going to miss Summer. Conditions were poor on 10 and 15 meters, 80 meters was very noisy, so concentrated on 20 & 40 meters. Sure glad I got my General on Field Day, almost half of my contacts were on 20 meters, and it had the loudest signals. Looking forward to the next Sprint.
K4BAJ	Hope for more activity in the next Sprint
WU1V	Really enjoyed this sprint, my first FISTS event. 40 meters was very active, only one QSO on 20 meters. My QRP sigs didn't get out very far, but most reports I received were very strong RST. I put in about 2 hours out of the 4 possible. I welcomed the 5 non-FISTS participants (one didn't know this was a sprint even though I CQed TEST hihi! I gently let him know what was happening!) I worked and enjoyed working 14 FISTS members, 3 of whom are fairly new members. Managed to work 13 different states. Hope to do this again next time! 72, Rick WU1V

FISTS SPRINT FALL 2013

QRO

Call	Name	State	Fists #	Class	Total Q's	Member Q	Non Member Q	Points	Mults	Score	80M Qs	40M Qs	20M Qs	15M Qs	10M Qs
N2ED	Ed	NJ	2454	QRO	85	70	15	380	37	14060	0	18	41	24	2
WB0B	Larry	IA	2916	QRO	70	55	15	305	36	10980	0	21	41	7	1
WG7Y	Bob	WY	11830	QRO	66	54	12	294	31	9114	0	0	55	8	0
W4YE	Buddy	VA	3929	QRO	25	24	1	122	18	2196	0	3	19	2	1
KC4TVN	George	VA	8770	QRO	20	19	1	97	18	1746	0	5	12	3	0
K2NPN	Phil	NY	1988	QRO	25	24	1	122	13	1586	0	16	8	0	0
W0UY	Tom	KS	8632	QRO	20	18	2	94	16	1504	0	3	11	6	0
WB9DLC	Mike	IN	11145	QRO	20	20	0	100	15	1500	0	7	13	0	0
K4UK	Stan	VA	2934	QRO	18	15	3	81	16	1296	0	3	7	7	1
N3RSD	Frank	DE	2411	QRO	19	18	1	92	13	1196	0	7	10	2	0
W8KYD	Ron	OH	10121	QRO	17	17	0	85	14	1190	0	7	8	2	0
KG2LO	Roland	NJ	2980	QRO	18	18	0	90	13	1170	0	13	4	1	0
I5ECW	Vannl	DX	16505	QRO	17	17	0	85	11	935	0	0	12	5	0
K8BAT	John	OH	16091	QRO	14	14	0	70	9	630	0	4	9	1	0
VE5BCS	Harold	SK	3948	QRO	14	9	5	55	9	495	0	0	6	7	1
AA0CL	Gary	MO	15785	QRO	10	10	0	50	8	400	0	0	8	0	0
W4RKN	Karen	VA	2407	QRO	8	8	0	40	7	280	0	6	2	0	0
KS0M	Dick	MO	3067	QRO	7	7	0	35	6	210	0	0	7	0	0
NZ1D	Bill	FL	6315	QRO	7	6	1	32	6	192	0	0	7	0	0
K8CI	Rich	OH	5270	QRO	5	5	0	25	5	125	0	3	2	0	0
G4LHI	Peter	DX	2219	QRO	5	4	1	22	5	110	0	1	3	1	0
KA3YNV	William	MD	3685	QRO	2	2	0	10	2	20	0	2	0	0	0
				QRO	0			0		0	0				
				QRO	0			0		0	0				

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FISTS SPRINT FALL 2013

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GRP

Call	Name	State	Fists #	Class	Total Q's	Member Q	Non Member Q	Points	Mults	Score	80M Qs	40M Qs	20M Qs	15M Qs	10M Qs
WB0PYF	Ray	MO	7986	QRP	43	35	8	191	23	4393	0	20	23	0	0
K5YQF	Cecil	TX	8077	QRP	35	34	1	172	19	3268	0	0	33	2	0
N3A	John	PA	11900	QRP	23	23	0	115	15	1725	0	15	8	0	0
KB2CVO	Tom	PA	8110	QRP		22	3	116	13	1508	0	25	0	0	0
K4BHG	Ron	MA	16087	QRP	20	17	3	91	12	1092	0	0	20	0	0
N9A	Ed	IL	Non Member	QRP	15	14	1	72	11	792	0	0	15	0	0
VA3RKM	Bob	ON	11797	QRP	8	8	0	40	6	240	0	2	8	0	0
KD9B	Dennis	KY	8437	QRP	7	7	0	35	6	210	0	2	5	0	0
KC9EHQ	David	TX	12779	QRP	5	4	1	22	4	88	0	0	5	0	0
AA7CU	Al	AZ	14241	QRP	3	3	0	15	3	45	0	0	0	3	0
				QRP	0			0		0	0	0		0	0
				QRP	0			0		0	0	0		0	0
				QRP	0			0		0	0	0		0	0
				QRP	0			0		0	0	0		0	0
				QRP	0			0		0	0	0		0	0

CLUB

Call	Name	State	Fists #	Class	Total Q's	Member Q	Non Member Q	Points	Mults	Score	80M Qs	40M Qs	20M Qs	15M Qs	10M Qs
W4FFF	Rick	NC	9700	Club	31	28	3	146	19	2774	0	8	20	3	0
KL2R	Larry	AK	14450	Club	27	17	10	105	21	2205	0	0	17	10	0
W4PCR	Stan	VA	7007	Club	3	3	0	15	3	45	0	3	0	0	0

SOAP BOX

K2NPN	I heard more WES (SKCC) ops on the bands than I did FISTS. However, I had lots of fun sorting things out. I called "CQ FS" and I had many folks giving me their SKCC numbers. Those SKCC numbers sure look like a FISTS number except most of them have a "C" or "T" at the end. Too many contests on the same frequencies... 73 Phil - K2NPN.
KL2R	First FISTS Sprint for me, ever. Nice to see you all.
K8CI	Just not worth the effort anymore
G4LHI	Hope you get a nice lot of entries for this event Ed, I was sorry not to have had longer, but condx not very good, but I enjoyed the little time I had.
KS0M	With two other CW contests going on, it was a chore to find FISTS calls. But, had some fun.
KC9EHQ	My first FISTS sprint down here since moving to Texas, and getting back on the air regularly. Had a great time. It was a nice little break from the QRP-ARCI Fall Sprint that was going on at the same time. Hopefully by next Sprint, I will be copying faster than I currently copy. Thanks to those who slowed down to work me. Looking forward to many more fun sprints.
WB0PYF	Thanks for all the new members, good sprint
N3RSD	Fun time again! Look fwd to the Winter Sprint from Florida
K5YQF	I managed more QSOs than my last Sprint (Spring), but it still seemed like Central Texas was in a "propagation void." Thanks to all and cu next Sprint.
VE3BCS	I wish I had more time it seemed the band had more fists needing contacts. I hope all is well Harold
N2ED	Good to hear the DX Fists calling in. Worked two AK stations too, FB.
W4YE	Good condx - pleased to participate and work a few members, 73
W8KYD	Was great to participate plus meeting other Fists ops. At times, the Sprint offered a challenge for hearing contacts due to QSB and QRM from at least two other on going tests. Has any copnsideration been given for a lite night Sprint? 73 Ron
VA3RKM	KX3, 5w, verticals. Thanks for the contacts
KA3YNV	Due to several reasons, I only had 20 minutes to participate. Mainly, Murphy's Law showed up and I had to to service my antenna. I put my time to good use and made 2 QSOs. his was my first Sprint. I will participate in the winter. I am not a fast copy but made out OK. Best regards.
N3A, K3W/WP-op	Fun to put our NAQCC Special Event call N3A in the FISTS sprint. FISTS has been great to the NAQCC ever since the club was founded in October 2004.
AA0CL	FIRST FISTS CONTEST & FIRST FISTS CONTACT, DIPOLE WITH APEX AT 20 FT, I TRIED TO MATCH KEY/KEYER TO CALLING STATION
I5ECW	This is my first experience in Fists activity, see you in the next one.
WB0B	Fall Sprint allowed me to get away from doing yard work. The fun I had helped to relax some sore spots and prevented blisters on my hands. Smile, didn't you have a good time too!